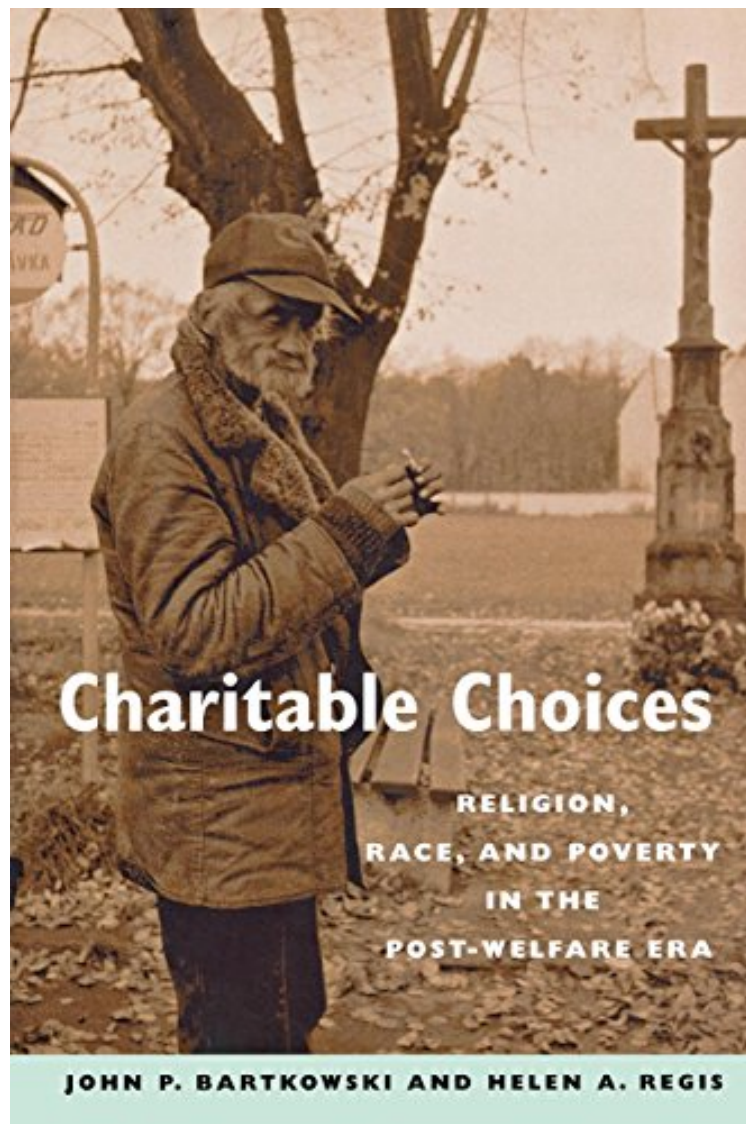


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Charitable Choices: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era

John P. Bartkowski, Helen A. Regis
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John P. Bartkowski, Helen A. Regis : Charitable Choices: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era
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Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era:

Congregations and faith-based organizations have become key participants in America's welfare revolution. Recent legislation has expanded the social welfare role of religious communities, thus revealing a pervasive lack of faith in purely economic responses to poverty. *Charitable Choices* is an ethnographic study of faith-based poverty relief in 30 congregations in the rural south. Drawing on in-depth interviews and fieldwork in Mississippi faith communities, it examines how religious conviction and racial dynamics shape congregational benevolence. Mississippi has long had the nation's highest poverty rate and was the first state to implement a faith-based welfare reform initiative. The book provides a grounded and even-handed treatment of congregational poverty relief rather than abstract theory on faith-based initiatives. The volume examines how congregations are coping with national developments in social welfare policy and reveals the strategies that religious communities utilize to fight poverty in their local communities. By giving particular attention to the influence of theological convictions and organizational dynamics on religious service provision, it identifies both the prospects and pitfalls likely to result from the expansion of charitable choice.

Provides important insight into the manner in which federal support of faith-based poverty relief initiatives affect religious identity in the Golden Triangle Region of rural Mississippi. -*Journal of Church and State* The book provides a thorough historical overview of the events that led up to the Bush administration's decision to promote faith-based social welfare. This thoughtful book is a useful addition to the growing literature on the subject and should be widely consulted. -*Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* A wonderful book and a great piece of original research. I not only found the work insightful, but it was interesting all along the way. Bartkowski and Regis are bright new stars! -Bob Wineburg, Jefferson Pilot Excellence Professor, UNC Greensboro and author of *A Limited Partnership: The Politics of Religion Welfare and Social Service* Bartkowski and Regis get behind the rhetoric about church-based social services in this timely examination of on-the-ground realities as seen by Mississippi clergy. Perhaps the most important lesson in these pages is how strongly race shapes even religious efforts to aid the poor. *Charitable Choices* helps us understand why this is so. -Mark Chaves, University of Arizona Well-written and clearly organized. -*Journal of Social Services* About the Author John P. Bartkowski is Associate Professor of Sociology at Mississippi State University. He is the author of *Remaking the Godly Marriage: Gender Negotiation in Evangelical Families*. Helen Regis is Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Louisiana State University. Her work on New Orleans jazz funerals and second lines has appeared in *American Ethnologist* and *Cultural Anthropology*.